FROM: Message Media
P.O. Box 9007
Berkeley CA 94709 USA

FIRST CLASS MAIL

To:

Table D'Hote

$2.50

Cooked Prunes — Oatmeal
Cream of Wheat — Melon in Season
Crisp Dry Cereal — Chilled Orange Juice
Tomato or Prune Juice

(Any two items listed above will be served for .30 additional)

SAUSAGE LINKS WITH SCRAMBLED EGGS
BROWNED CORNED BEEF HASH, POACHED EGG
BROILED SUGAR CURED HAM WITH EGGS
WHEAT CAKES, BACON AND SYRUP
COUNTRY BACON WITH EGGS

Home Fried Potatoes served on request

White, Rye or Whole Wheat Toast
Toasted English Muffin - Sweet Rolls - Muffins

Preserves — Orange Marmalade

Coffee — Grade "A" Milk — Tea
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RAIL TRAVEL, MIDWEST BANK AND NEW HAVEN CREDIT CARDS WELCOMED HERE.

THE STEWARD WILL WELCOME YOUR COMMENTS ON OUR FOOD AND SERVICE
IF YOU PREFER, WRITE TO SIDNEY N. PHELPS, DIRECTOR, DINING, SLEEPING AND
PARLOR CAR SERVICE, PENN CENTRAL, LONG ISLAND CITY, N.Y. 11101

PC-2
5-20-70

RAIL TRAVEL newsletter

Vol. 1 No. 16
July 19, 1971

Broadway Limited

BREAKFAST

(PLEASE WRITE ON MEAL CHECK
EACH ITEM DESIRED)

For private room meal service a charge of one dollar per person will be made. Immediate service cannot be assured.

Bon Appetit!

The BROADWAY LIMITED bids you welcome to its table. Enjoy the renowned Continental and American cuisine of the Line's master chefs . . . the courteous service of its most skilled waiters. In this dining car — pride of the Penn Central — we are dedicated to making your repast aboard an exquisite dining experience.

ON THE COVER (FRONT & BACK): Portions of the breakfast menu from the PC BROADWAY LIMITED, as described by Paul Rayton in his report on that train, pre-Amtrak, in this issue. Next train in his series of articles, SCL's SILVER STAR.

A NOTE ABOUT BACK ISSUES: We have reprinted some of the early issues of RTN that were sold out, and are currently able to fill back issue orders, except that issue no. 1 is sold out and there is a delay in reprinting it, since it was partly mimeographed and the original stencil is damaged. In order not to delay your order longer, we are doing this: if your order included issue no. 1, we will send the balance of your order now and forward no. 1 when reprinting is completed. Thank you for your patience. (Back issues are 25¢ each, 5 for $1.00. Address: Message Media, Dept. RTN, PO Box 9007, Berkeley, CA 94709.)

LETTERS

...Good grief, look at the profit potential in this (La Junta-Cheyenne, etc.--see EXPRESS ADS, page 15) setup. This would utilize the population and best track. I wrote Kendall and all the people I could, but guess they want the easy way out. I'm all for Amtrak turning the buck, not running on a Halftrak basis. If anywhere near convenient connections were made, the profit potential would be huge.

I don't wish to be called a railfan, but a railroader who knows what he is talking about.

Keith White
Clerk, BN Inc.
Pacific Junction, Iowa

On Amtrak's positive side, the SCL ticket office here in Miami is extremely courteous and helpful on the phone and in person, and highly efficient. No difficulty in getting tickets or information gladly and courteously given.

I have written Amtrak and NARP to try to get them to reroute the SOUTHWIND through Atlanta for obvious reasons. No luck so far.

Dr. Charles A. Dunn
Coral Gables, Florida

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THAT NEW AMTRAK TIMETABLE

The second nationwide Amtrak schedule, effective July 12, was distributed to agents the week before. This time 480,000 were printed. Some schedule changes were new, some were already in effect when the publication appeared. An innovation with this issue was the inclusion of 4 tables showing non-Amtrak train schedules, including the little-noted Atlanta-Augusta train 1/2 of Georgia R.R.

A few small changes went unremarked: the CITY OF SAN FRANCISCO's time was lengthened 10 mins westbound, 9 mins eastbound. Other time changes were noted in earlier issues of RTN. Amtrak tickets can now be used on Greyhound and Continental Trailways buses.

Another big schedule change is due some time in October. In the meantime, look for equipment changes after August 1, the date Amtrak has set for finalizing its equipment selection. Amtrak this month is meeting separately with the railroads concerned to negotiate sales or leasing of cars. Amtrak met with SP representatives on July 13.

ANOTHER RAIL STRIKE BEGINS

The morning of July 16, the United Transportation Union struck Union Pacific and Southern Railway (a strike against C&NW was postponed by court order). At the same time, most other railroads put into effect changed work rules that are the main subject of dispute. This involves dismissal of many workers and reduction of pay for others. It was the third railroad strike in 7 months. Negotiations are now proceeding, but UTU says it will strike Santa Fe and five small connecting roads July 30, while Southern Pacific & Norfolk & Western will be hit July 24 if no settlement has been reached.

Amtrak operations affected by the strike involve SR's non-Amtrak leg of the tri-weekly Los Angeles-New York through sleeper train, and the Ogden-Denver UP portion of the CITY OF SAN FRANCISCO run.

An Amtrak spokesman early announced that the latter leg would be re-routed through Rio Grande's Colorado route, but this did not occur. A report on the Ogden-Denver situation comes from reader Bob Glover:

The eastbound CITY left Oakland June 15 as Amtrak handed out notices that the "California Zephyr" riders would be bused between Ogden and Denver the next morning, as the strike began. At 4:00am in Ogden, buses awaited the 150 or so passengers. There was a 2½ hour stop for a free lunch, and Denver arrival was at 7:00, an hour after the Chicago connection had left. However, a special train was prepared

consisting of 5 coaches and 4 sleepers, pulled by 2 old E cab units. All passengers got their original accomodations back, and Amtrak representatives were abundantly present and apologetic. Riders felt Amtrak handled the situation well. Passengers had dinner at Denver before the train left for Chicago.

At some point in Iowa, the lead engine broke down and was removed. The second engine, facing backwards, pulled the train to a siding where it could be reversed. In the process of reversing, a freight moving by damaged the switch and created a long delay. At Lincoln, Nebr., a diner from the westbound train had been removed, and was placed on this extra train at 2:00am.

Arrival at Chicago was 4½ hours late, so that connections for those going further were missed. Amtrak people were solicitous and apologetic, and there our report ends.

HIGH SPEED EAST COAST ROUTE PROPOSED

Imagine a rail system from Boston to Miami with trains running at speeds of 100-150mph. Such a system may come about in time for the nation's 200th birthday in 1976. The plan originated two years ago with a group in Cambridge, Mass., called Polis '76. Their plan, involving primarily track straightening and elimination of grade crossings, has been sent to the Dept. of Transportation and found to be feasible, both technically and economically. It would cost up to $2 billion. The plan is now being studied by the American Revolution Bicentennial Commission, and will require several other governmental approvals, including that of Congress.

The route would follow the present Penn Central line from Boston to Washington, the Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac line from Washington to Richmond, and the Seaboard Coast Line for the remainder. A branch would be built to connect with Atlanta. It could carry both passengers and freight.

ICC PROPOSES CONTROL OF RAILROAD DIVERSIFICATION

The Interstate Commerce Commission July 21 presented to a Senate subcommittee a plan whereby it would have the power to oversee the acquisition and control of all modes of surface transportation so that conglomerates wouldn't have the "ability to strip or spin off carrier resources and leave a shell incapable of providing transportation service sufficient to meet public needs." Subcommittee chairman Sen. Vance Hartke said he felt the proposal was not bold enough or sufficiently innovative.

NEWS IN BRIEF...

SOUTHERN PACIFIC was to get some E units from UP to run on the West Coast trains to replace SDP45s which would be put on freights in the Southwest. But because of their limited mountainous performance they just went on the SUNSET instead. Immediate result: a breakdown eastbound at El Paso, requiring a push from a freight... NORTH COAST LIMITED traffic so heavy, says recent rider, that it could go daily... REPORT on the SOUTH WIND, PC portion, is glowing: nice diner, linens and all that... SPOKANE-Seattle train 5 hrs late few days ago, cause unknown... BILL FAHRENWALD, President of 20th Cent. RR Club, on West Coast visit rode SP CASCADE, got drawing room for the price of a bedroom, since Amtrak does not acknowledge accomodations other than roomettes and bedrooms... CHICAGO-San Francisco CITY has just adopted standard menu for all 3 of its diners--SP, UP, BN--and riders find it reasonable and good. Most expensive dinner is $5.50 steak, incl. soup, salad, and dessert. Gone is SP's $7.00 steak. On first run, SP crews were a little slow, unaccustomed to preparing so many courses ... EMPIRE BUILDER has been running about 18 cars, 23 or 24 when combined with the NORTH COAST LIMITED... WARNING NO PHOTOGRAPHY through Vandenberg AFB on the West Coast route, says D. P. Morgan in TRAINS (Aug.). Says who? RTN has whole set of slides taken there with no problems... AMTRAK'S policy on excursion trains is to cooperate fully, but it will have only limited equipment available. Excursion operators can use any passenger and freight lines of any member railroads. Since this announcement, the Pacific Locomotive Association has begun plans for a Fall trip to include Milwaukee Road's electrified line in Washington... MOST major Amtrak routes will eventually get dome cars. Delay is due to Amtrak's bargaining with member roads for purchase or lease of cars it wants. Rumor: BN shops in Seattle refurbishing a square-end parlor dome and rebuilding a Zephyr round-end dome into parlor car to run on the CASCADE... NO LIGHTS at the Oakland depot outside in the deepening dusk as the northbound CASCADE pauses is the rule, much to consternation of Amtrak reps. Has someone there forgotten location of the switch?... ECOLOGICAL tour of San Pablo Bay (Northern S.F. Bay) all the rage. View pristine shoreline mingled with refineries. See Pinole Point, with battle to make it a park now raging. Best way to see all this is from dome of CITY OF SAN FRANCISCO between Oakland & Martinez... NARP estimates that full-fledged rail strike would hit 834,400 rail commuters and 46,500 intercity rail travelers... SEABOARD COAST LINE, reports Herb Rau in Miami News July 14, is calling Amtrak "Half-track" because of halfway measures. They gripe that train hostesses who were earning $6500 a year are now making $12,000 with Amtrak. The Half-track nickname cropped up suddenly and widely this month, probably from World War II nickname of "amtrack," an amphibious tractor, and "half-track," a half-tractor, half-wheeled machine... NEWS FROM NARP, monthly publication (June) is full of complaints about Amtrak operations. Get it with $5 or more membership (NARP, 417 New Jersey Ave. S.E., Washington DC 20003.)

KEEPING TRACK

...with Paul Rayton

(A regular RTN feature. Each issue presents another review-critique of a selected pre-Amtrak train.)

BROADWAY LIMITED

Date: Summer, 1970

If any phrase could describe the situation that American rail passengers encountered in 1970, it would be "paradoxical and unpredictable."

Experiences I described on the SPIRIT OF ST. LOUIS are a direct contradiction to what you'd find on the BROADWAY LIMITED on the very same railroad--indeed, the very same tracks. I wouldn't have believed these two trains were under the aegis of the same company, but I knew it and couldn't escape the fact. There were lots of things wrong with the BROADWAY of 1970, but there were lots of things right. In fact, incomparable.

Everyone knows the Penn Central operated the worst train service in the country, worse probably than even the Southern Pacific. So no one who has not been there will believe me when I state that until November, 1970 the Penn Central operated a train that was without a doubt one of the top three trains in the country.

Writers and riders all over the country fuss, fulminate, blame, rail, and diatribe about their horrible experiences on Penn Central. And to be sure, a full measure of criticism falls due to the Company. But my feeling is that most of them were so predisposed to hating PC that they could never be objective in their appraisal of another PC train--especially one they did not have to ride. As it was, my sorties into PC-land were often enough to keep rather close tabs on the situation, but never to the point of a daily commuting ritual--the sort of thing I am sure would sour even the most rabid of rail buffs.

Historically speaking, it wasn't even the real BROADWAY, for a few years back it was combined with the GENERAL and assigned the number of the latter, 48/49.

What's in a name? How did the BROADWAY live up to its proud heritage? Well, for instance, until almost the last months of pre-Amtrak operation, this train always carried at least five sleeping cars. Never mind that the passenger load on some trips might fill only two; never mind that the occasional occupant of one of the lounges might feel lonely. Nowhere else on the entire PC system would that quantity of equipment be regularly assigned to assure adequate facilities for any and all who might happen to want it.

I could see PC economizing a little, tho. When I first made my acquaintance with the BROADWAY she was carrying three coaches. Toward the end, that dwindled to just two (in the off season). Summer 1970 loads once again saw revival of the 3-car standard, but we all knew that, come Fall, it would be only two again.

And yet I feel the move was justified. Seldom did I see even two coaches filled to capacity. Every operation has to adjust to peaks and lulls. But that was just about the only place on this train you could actually see the belt tightening.

What railroad had the dirtiest windows? Of course it was PC. Still, on a stormy Winter's day I have watched dirty, ugly trains pulling out of Penn Station in New York. And standing beside them was the BROADWAY, windows shining from a wash job. If nothing else, I think the standing order around the yards out on Long Island must have been, "Come hell or high water, the BROADWAY's windows get washed!" And even if the train arrived late into New York, it would have clean windows when sent out from the yards to pick up the first passengers. (You could tell when they were rushed out there, or had some sort of problems: the dining car windows were lower priority and sometimes they went out unwashed.)

And speaking of the dining car--where else, in 1970, could you find a train that bothered to offer a twin-unit dining car, one of the finer luxuries ever invented by man? (Answer: on SCL, but that's another story.) Not even the highly respected western railroads offered diners of the class of the BROADWAY's--and no twin units.

One full car length comprised the seating area, and the kitchen was in the next car, with a double swinging door between the two. It was almost like some of the old SP articulated cars, but these were not articulated.

Tables were the "non-crowd" design. Along one side of the car four could be seated, while on the other side of the aisle a slightly smaller table was intended for two. This arrangement gave more aisle space and two could eat in privacy without occupying space for four. The tables had been set into this configuration as an afterthought--under the tablecloth I discovered the folded-down remnant of the re-convertible four-seater table. With the 4/2 seating, the car could seat 64.

Placement of the kitchen in a separate car had one real blessing: it allowed for a larger kitchen (the rest of the car provided crew sleeping quarters). And, again not shirking the promise, PC fully staffed and utilized that kitchen. It's hard to believe that in Summer 1970, the crew still included a full-time salad specialist. You'd get not just a simple tossed salad made up by the chef in his spare time, but a salad prepared by a genuine chef du salade! If only the clientele had known or cared!

The less crowded kitchen gave other benefits to the diner. A large metal hood covered a muffin carrier. A flame underneath kept the dinner muffins warm until you desired them. Then, the whole carrier was brought to the table and you selected one, two, or several muffins from the manifest Cornucopia. And there was that bushel basket: after-dinner fresh, red apples, brought to you on a plate, to nibble there or take back to your room for a late night snack.

And the interior of the car! What a pleasure! It was finished in a light blue glaze, with mirrors at the ends of the car making it seem even larger. Gone was the typical boxy interior. The end walls utilized a slight angling of lines to give a more modern, less rigid feeling. Linens set the tables, with hybrid silverware (PRR, NYC, even NY, NH, & H). On every table was a small incandescent fixture with a well-directed lamp aglow, casting its yellow rays down onto the table. As the sun set during your dinner hours, this lamp would provide increasingly intimate lighting, adding to all the other nuances for a marvelous-feeling dining car.

On each table, awaiting even the casual light eater, was a wicker basket of croissants, fresh (usually) from the bakery, as well as onion rolls, poppyseed rolls, and crackers.

Every table had fresh carnations, and Conductor and Brakeman also wore carnation boutonnières. Can you still believe this is the Penn Central?

The crowning glory was the glass-and-silver PRR water pitcher. It was the "standard" water carafe seen on several other lines (particularly eastern railroads) but this one had the PRR logo cut into the glass--a beautiful example of workmanship, and probably a lost art today. You certainly will find nothing like it on an airline.

The BROADWAY was one of the few remaining trains that carried separate lounges for first class and coach passengers. On departure from the terminals, free hors d'oeuvres were offered in the first class lounge. This was actually a lounge-sleeper, with four bedrooms, and a pantry for the bartender. A venerable wooden cabinet stood in one spot, looking forlorn. Years ago it served the noble purpose of protecting the wire recorder used to provide music en route. They took out the electronics and left the box. Did they think they might use it again?

The equipment for the coach lounge varied, probably depending on what equipment was functioning. It was always a full-size lounge car, with some sort of bar or snacks-bar. I saw two types of car in service here: one, rather old, with curving sofas and a 1930s look. The other must have come off some former PRR N.Y.-to-Washington train. It was all steel and glass, with very angular partitions to isolate the snack area. The seats were pleasantly colored and comfortable in both these cars.

(Continued on page 10)

CAPTAIN AMTRACK

CONTINUED FROM LAST ISSUE

CAPTAIN AMTRACK

CONTINUED FROM LAST ISSUE

Entering the pleasant-feeling dining car, you would be escorted to a seat. On several occasions we rode with a Mr. H. L. Steck as Steward. His warm and courteous attitude can be taken as an indicator of the attitude and rapport of the crew as a whole. He took his job seriously and did his best to help the passengers passing through his domain. "Would you care for dinner?" he would ask people walking through. How could they resist? And at breakfast he would try to put a morning paper on your table. Even the waiters seemed to take special pains to please you. Surely, for plain old humane treatment, the BROADWAY once again rated high in the nation.

After being seated, you could start to munch on the croissants. And before you knew it, there would be a plate of celery, olives, and radishes, iced for freshness, set before you.

At about this point, the experienced train rider would notice another "customizing" of this train--the menu. Unprepossessing and blunt on the outside, inside it bore the train's name as a heading. All other Penn Central menus said simply "Welcome" at the top--a standardized menu. Here we are special. Even the menu confirms it.

Yet all these little items pale by comparison with the quality of the food served on the BROADWAY. Unless you have eaten there, you would not believe the extraordinary finesse with which the dinner was conceived and prepared. Appetizers? Name your favorite: pate? chilled gazpacho? marinated hearts of artichokes? consommé Mogador? fruit cup? These and others were served as a first course. The consommé was customized with a multitude of spices and bits of onion. The artichokes (Ah! Those artichokes!), soft and tender, with a subtle dressing that didn't insult the taste buds. Soups were made by the chef, not taken from a can.

The main entrees were generally limited to four choices. Roast Prime Ribs and Broiled Sirloin Steak were always offered, and the others changed when menus were revised, about every three months. For example, how about a super "Seafood Oceania; scallops, crabmeat, and shrimp. Prepared with wine, heavy cream and spices."

PENN CENTRAL

Or perhaps you'd prefer a "Veal, cordon bleu. (Prepared to order)". My weak point on the BROADWAY was the Roast Prime Ribs. I just couldn't get enough of it! Even though I sometimes rode weekly, I <u>had</u> to have that roast beef. Without exception, this was the finest roast beef that I have ever been served, and that includes restaurants on the ground. Large slices, served exactly as ordered. Hot, tender, basted in succulent natural juices, this roast was the answer to a beef lover's dream. And if you weren't full, maybe seconds could be arranged. But save some room for vegetables! And the dessert, too! Vegetables included unusual offerings like green asparagus au beurre, creamed spinach or rice pilaff, and (seemingly) a hundred different preparations of potatoes (duchesse, rissolé, cottage fried, sauté, etc.). The salad <u>du jour</u> was posted in the menu, but variations could be arranged.

Another entree worthy of mention was the Seafood Oceania--superb! A magical delight for the seafood lover, it was a surprise to me, for I had never encountered those particular ingredients in such a harmonious blend. It was served in a large bowl, à la soup, but you sipped it more slowly, desiring to savor every delicious moment. Not too spicy and not "fishy" tasting, it was eminently recommendable.

Included in the price ($6.25) of these full Table d'Hote dinners was a small bottle (tenth) of Christian Brothers Napa Rosé wine, "compliments of the Penn Central." If you wanted a heavier wine, the BROADWAY was one of the few trains that still carried an excellent French wine, B&G's Chateauneuf du Pape '66, or B&G's Graves, $2.75 for a "split" bottle.

Desserts were widely varied. The camembert cheese had been aged to perfection and was served with wafers. The cheese cake was, again, and I fear I repeat myself, excellent. (I usually shy

away from restaurant cheese cake, it is usually so horribly dry and tasteless. I decided to try it here, reasoning that if I were going to get good cheese cake anywhere, it would be on the BROADWAY. My hunch was justified.) The pies were commendable. I didn't care for their version of a chocolate eclair, though. I suspect it was frozen until use.

To top everything off, there was tea, etc., with after dinner mints and a finger bowl. The latter was lined with a paper insert that said, "Thank You; New York Central System." You're welcome!

There were still other entrees offered on less expensive "combination meals." For $4.25 you could order a "Grilled Swordfish Steak, Hotelier Butter." And the swordfish was prepared, as you would expect by now from the BROADWAY, perfectly. These combination meals were less elaborate than the full Table d'Hote dinners: narrower selection of appetizer and vegetables was permitted, but you did not go away hungry.

If you wanted just a snack, there was also a "sandwich menu"--in addition to snacks you could buy in the lounges.

Breakfast choices were more limited, and relatively higher priced than the dinners. For $2.50 you could feast your way almost into the last station. Main courses included Sausage Links with Scrambled Eggs; Broiled Sugar Cured Ham with Eggs; Wheat Cakes, Bacon and Syrup; or Browned Corned Beef Hash with Poached Egg. Breakfasts are generally the most expensive meals on trains, considering what you get for your money. This was no exception, tho I had no complaints about the quality of preparation nor size of the serving.

What did I NOT like about the BROADWAY? Well, some of the equipment was an in-service museum. The sleeping cars had no taps for fresh, cold <u>drinking</u> water. They still used the Pullman stainless steel decanters in every room. Inconvenient if thirsty. The roadbed was no great shakes, either. Between New York and Harrisburg it's pretty well cared for, but the Midwest is something else. And shoddy maintenance showed all over the cars. You could walk along one of the carpeted passageways in a sleeping car and one foot would occasionally sink down two or more inches--into what? Was the floor rusted away, or was it just an unreplaced manhole cover? You never knew for sure! At the next moment you felt you might be involuntarily standing on the tracks! And I spent one night in a roomette with a steam valve that didn't know the meaning of the word "off." That might sound nice in the Wintertime, but <u>that</u> much heat I didn't need. In the morning I found condensate had dampened virtually the entire carpet on my little floor. Stepping on that squishy carpet was an unforgettable experience.

Much of the blame for these equipment problems lies squarely on the lackadaisical performance by the service union members. Their callous disregard for anything other than their own selfish, lazy interests has been another major factor in the unreliable railroad equipment--and the corresponding decline in passenger traffic. I was never so pleased--and also surprised--as when one night, on the way out of New York, we actually had the music system operating in the diner. This happened after the bankruptcy, and both my wife and I noticed its unusual presence, which we had never heard before (though I had suspected the equipment was there). Maybe someone had kicked the electrician back to work at his job. There was some "Supervisor" aboard, and we expressed our hope to him that they might keep up the fine service on the BROADWAY. His answer was noncommittal, until...

November 8, 1970: The BROADWAY LIMITED died todey. The expenses on the struggling Penn Central are just too much to bear. Gone are the twin-unit diner, the flowers, the two lounges, the menu, the multitude of sleeping cars. Oh, a train still runs, still follows the route, still even bears the name. Even the crews are the same. But now, barely six months before the government is to assume the operations, the standards fell. Probably never again to be restored.

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COMMUTING AND RAPID TRANSIT

Battle Over Southern Pacific Commute Fare Increase

SP is seeking a 10% fare increase on its S.F. Peninsula commute runs, and hearings were held in S.F. before the State Public Utilities Commission. The S.F. Chronicle reported that at the July 8 hearing, Christopher Lovelock, British graduate student in business and transportation at Stanford, tore into the company in regard to these points: 1)slow schedules 2) 40-50 year old cars 3) infrequent off-peak service 4) estimated 80% trains not on time 5) no improvements accompanying several past fare increases 6) no vigorous negotiations with rail unions 7) no advertising since 1962 8) no surveys of riders' needs or wants 9) no attempts to cut costs or stimulate ridership. He suggested cutting off-peak fares to encourage more riders, who now account for nearly a third of commute income. The SP lawyer present tried to cut off Lovelock's testimony, but failing that "buried his face wearily in his hands."

N.Y. Commuters' Summer of Discontent

It's been a bad month for commuters in and around New York City. Here's a brief rundown of major events:

July 5: thousands of 3-day weekend travelers returning to N.Y. jam highways with tieups of up to 20 miles long.

July 7: PC commuter train derails entering Grand Central Terminal, killing one rider and injuring others.

July 8: a worker repairing the switch blamed for the July 7 accident left a heavy drill near the track, which derailed another train, but without injuries. An overhead power line falling took one of two tunnels under the Hudson out of service, delaying trains a half-hour. A breakdown in the yards at Stamford, Conn. delayed commuters bound for N.Y. up to 1½ hours.

July 9: an LIRR commuter train, empty, rammed the rear of a second, loaded train in a tunnel leaving Penn Station. 53 were injured, but fortunately the last 2 cars were empty because the air conditioning system in them had broken down, so there were fewer injuries than might have occurred. Nine of 12 cars derailed, blocking traffic. A PC crew was operating the empty train.

July 12: a massive power blackout in Upper Manhattan & the Bronx knocked signal systems for subway trains out & tied up traffic for 1 to 2½ hours in the early morning.

July 16: a 3rd rail short circuit started a fire in the Lexington Ave. IRT tunnel. About 900 riders were led out of the smoke.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK ***

"We pull into the terminal at Hobart in southeastern Los Angeles, end of the 2,202-mile journey from Chicago. It has taken only 39 hours and 20 minutes, 40 minutes faster than scheduled--a trip faster than that of the SUPER CHIEF, the Santa Fe's crack passenger train."

--Keith Johnson on Santa Fe's SUPER C freight, Time Magazine, July 19

"I love Switzerland. Man, riding on a Swiss train with a glass roof, drinking cafe au lait, reading the International Herald-Tribune, being served by a waiter who is proud of his job--I tellya, the Aga Khan can't live better than that!"

--Bill Graham of Fillmore East & West, in San Francisco Chronicle, July 9

"Swiss trains run often--usually every hour. Pay a couple of dollars to check your baggage through to your destination. Then you can get off at any interesting village. Have lunch and pick up the next train. Your bags will be in the baggage room."

--Stanton Delaplane, S.F. Chronicle, July 18

SLIP OF THE MONTH CLUB ***

According to the new Amtrak schedule, if you telephone 398-4141 in San Francisco, you will reach the ATSP railroad. The Atchison, Topeka and Southern Pacific?

COMMUTING (Continued)

HONG KONG PLANS A SUBWAY

A $720 million subway system for Hong Kong has been proposed. It would be completed by 1985. Plans call for it to handle more riders than any other such system except possibly Tokyo.

WILL BART CARRY BICYCLES ON ITS TRAINS?

It may, if an experimental system begun July 8 by AC Transit, the efficient publicly-owned Eastbay bus system, proves successful. AC rebuilt two older buses to carry 24 riders & 24 bicycles each on the transbay route between Berkeley and San Francisco. Fare on the Pedal Hopper is $1.25, compared to the straight passenger fare of 55¢.

BIDS RECEIVED ON NEW SAN FRANCISCO STREETCARS

Bids on 78 streetcars were entered by Rohr Corp. (builders of BART cars), Pullman-Standard, and the German Du Wag Co., but all proved higher than initial estimates. The bids are now being reviewed by the S.F. Muni Railway. Cars are to be used in both subway and surface operation.

EDITORIAL: THE HIGHWAY SLAUGHTER AGAIN

Last time we stated that the statistics of holiday weekend traffic deaths are no different from ordinary weekends, pro-rated. Our statement seemed to be disproved by the final Independence Day weekend figures, which soared far higher than even the National Safety Council predicted.

Our basic thesis is unchanged, however. It is that accidents are not really accidental, but are programmed into any given transportation system. Some set of factors can be found to account for every mishap, and the frequency of mishaps can be adjusted by changing the causal factors. Moralizing about accidents only obscures their real causes.

Charles Reich states this well in THE GREENING OF AMERICA: "If a given number of automobiles are crowded onto a highway, there will be a predictable number of accidents. The moral approach tries to deal with this as a question of individual driver responsibility. It stresses safe driving and criminal penalties. Yet reduction of the accident rate is demonstrably a problem in engineering."

Yet highway planners still take the moralistic approach and emphasize, for one, the role of drinking in auto accidents, said to account for about half the fatalities. What about the other half? And which is easier--to prevent all drivers from drinking, or to design an alcohol-proof auto?

The continued proliferation of automobiles, ever more poorly constructed and poorly designed, is the major factor in auto accidents. Building more and more freeways, supposed to be safer than other roads, is not the answer. Clearly the most feasible solution is a major push toward public transit systems. Such a reasonable course of action won't be taken, though, since the actions we take are governed more by economic and political influence than by reason.

On July 18 the Dept. of Transportation discreetly dropped a safety proposal aimed at auto-truck accidents, since it was opposed by the powerful trucking industry lobby. Alterations in large trucks to prevent "underriding" mishaps (in which a car jams itself under a high truck) would have cost, it was estimated, $5 to $10 million per life saved. What is the dollar value of a human life? If the U.S. can spend more than that amount per capita for killing in Southeast Asia, why not spend it for preserving lives?

The responsibility for highway deaths lies upon the planners of the system--or upon those who allow an irrational system to perpetuate itself, which is the same thing.

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CALIFORNIANS: REMEMBER PROPOSITION 18? Join a citizens' lobby to work for mass transit development in California and to oppose continuance of large-scale freeway building. Support extensions of the BART system and oppose the "Southern Crossing" highway bridge over S.F. Bay in the 1972 voter referendum. Lobby in the State Legislature and U.S. Congress for legislation to finance rapid transit and reorder transportation priorities. Write to Citizens for Mass Transit, Norman Freitag, chairman, 1611 Spruce St., Berkeley, Calif. 94709 for further information.

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